

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. It saw fit to prevent its stations from broadcasting Ted Coppel's special on the war. Sinclair said that wasn't news. It is hard to understand how you can allow them to censor that tribute to our troops while airing a highly controversial hatchet job on a war hero.

The First Amendment only works if there exists media for the open expression of all views. The concentration of broadcast media to corporate overlords effectively silences our free press by squeezing out dissent from corporate America's interest.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.